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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, PM, PM/HDP; NSC FOR E.
MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: Demining: Advance team prepares the way for
imminent arrival of quick reaction force in Jaffna

Refs: 02 Colombo 2022, and previous

11. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified --
Please protect accordingly.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: Preparations for the arrival of the
second round of the USG-funded Quick Reaction Demining
Force (QRDF) are well in gear. The GSL is proving very
helpful in arranging for the QRDF's return. Mission
expects that the team will work in the same war-torn
region of Jaffna as last year's team. The QRDF's
efforts will serve to underscore continued strong
support by the U.S. for the peace process. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) In preparation for the expected March 19 arrival
of a USG-funded humanitarian demining (QRDF) team in Sri
Lanka, an advance team, led by PM/HDP Senior Adviser
Harry McCloy, has begun coordination efforts with the
Sri Lankan government. (Note: This is the second QRDF
team assigned to Sri Lanka. A QRDF team operated in the
northern district of Jaffna from April through October
last year.) Since its arrival late last week, the
advance team has been in close touch with the military,
civilian offices involved in demining within the GSL,
and international organizations conducting demining work
in Sri Lanka.

14. (SBU) The advance team found GSL interlocutors to be
extremely helpful in coordinating the arrival of the
QRDF team. (Note: The full team will include about 20
Mozambican nationals and four dogs.) The advance team
also found government officials responsive to its
concerns about assigning an appropriate task for the
QRDF. Priority areas for demining in the Jaffna
Peninsula are mainly set by the Government Affairs (GA)
office in Jaffna city, along with other actors. The
GA's representative, P. Sundarampillai, toured five
different sites with the advance team and military
representatives in the Jaffna area, March 12-13. All of
the parties involved in determining the site -- the GA's
office, MoD, the advance team, etc. -- agreed that a
site near the devastated town of Chavakachcheri was
superior to the rest for purposes of the QRDF. (Note:
This site is adjacent to land in an area called
Sarasalai that the first QRDF team demined last year.
To highlight the QRDF's activities, the Deputy Secretary
visited this area during his August 2002 visit to Sri
Lanka.)

15. (SBU) The advance team also attended a "National
Steering Committee Mine Action" meeting on March 13 to
review the upcoming arrival of the QRDF. (Note: The
"National Steering Committee" is a government-
coordinated body that brings together public and private
groups involved in demining.) The meeting was
constructive, with the advance team concluding that the
QRDF's planned activities fit in well with Sri Lanka's
national demining priorities, as well as efforts by
international and local NGO's. In fact, NGO
representatives expressed strong support for the return
of the QRDF.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Mission looks forward to the imminent
arrival of the full QRDF team. As with the efforts of
the first QRDF team, the work this team will do will
underline strong U.S. support for the peace process, aid
in the safe return of displaced persons, and foster
goodwill among Sri Lankans toward the U.S. END COMMENT.

17. (U) PM/HDP Senior Adviser Harry McCloy did not have
the opportunity to review this message.

18. (U) Minimize considered.

WILLS